P790048-1043

(2337)
R

March 30, 1979

Dear Senator Garn:

I refer to your inquiry of March 2 on behalf of Mr. Joe J. Christensen concerning a lecture given by the University of Oklahoma Campus Biblical Studies Association which included discussions on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This matter was previously brought to the Department's attention by Senator Hatch and a similar reply was sent to him.

Subsequent to the Jonestown incident, the Department was contacted by a person identifying himself as a member of the University of Oklahoma. He stated simply that the "University" was taking up a collection for the next-of-kin of the victims of Guyana. The caller was informed that if he wished to do so, he could write a letter to the Department providing information on how to obtain those funds so that it could be made available to the next-of-kin requesting assistance. No mention of the Campus Biblical Studies Association or of a lecture was made at that time.

The Department was advised later by Senator Hatch's office that the Campus Biblical Studies Association of the University of Oklahoma had sponsored a lecture on "Cults" and had advertised the lecture as a means to assist bereaved families of Jonestown victims and in such a way as to convey Department of State approval and cooperation. This information was confirmed by a telephone call to a Mr. Greg Botkin, a member of the Campus Biblical Studies Association and one of the sponsors of the lecture in question. The Department then received a letter from Mr. Botkin with a check for $35.00 to be made available to the next-of-kin.

The Honorable
Jake Garn,
United States Senate.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 2/27/81
RE[illegible] or XD[illegible] EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. EXEMPTION(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☒
RELEASE DENIED☐
FOI EXEMPTIONS

Enclosed for your information is a copy of our letter to Mr. Botkin returning the $35.00 check and advising him of the improprieties of advertising the lecture in such a way as to convey United States Government sponsorship.

Sincerely,

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

Enclosures:
1. Correspondence Returned.
2. Copy of letter to Mr. Botkin.

Drafted by:
CA/OCS/CCS/EA:PHegarty:jm
ext. 23675:3/26/79
Control NO. 0034-1390

Clearances: OCS:CADiPlacido
CA:AAGiset
H:ELKrizek